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NATURAL HEALING WORKING IN MEDICINE

Shirley
Sydenham



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NATURAL HEALING

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NATURAL HEALING

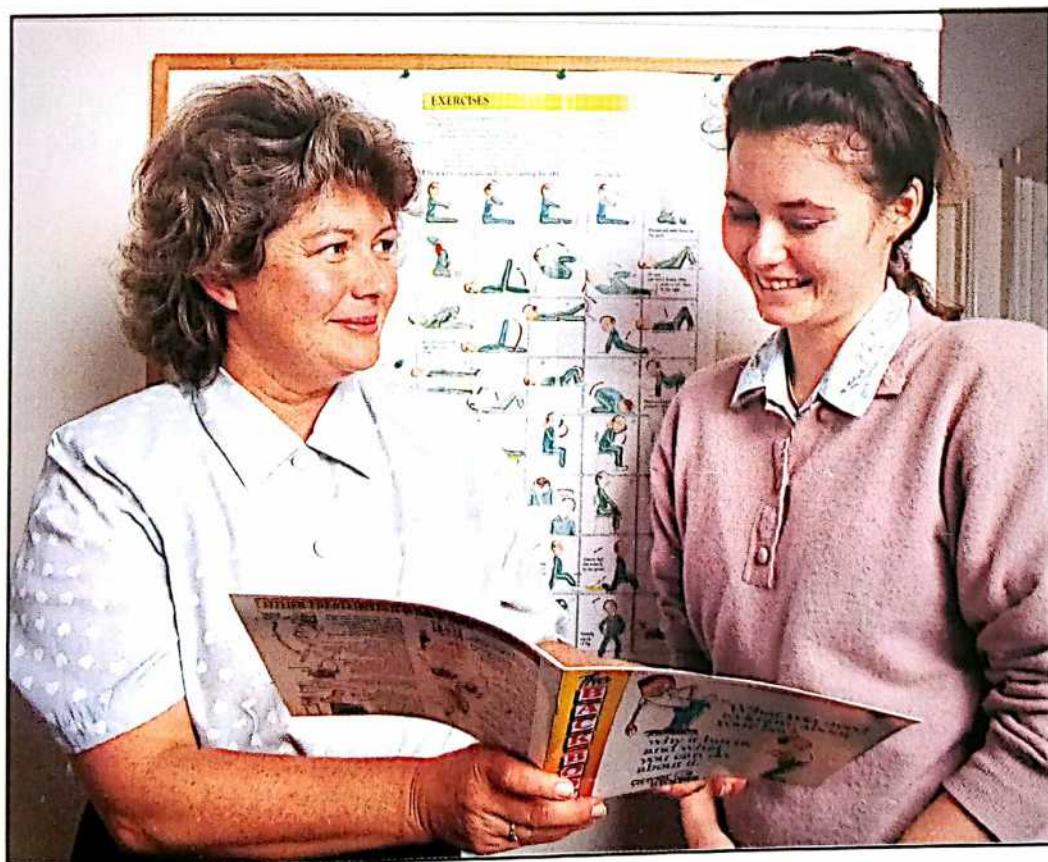
There are many people who choose not to visit ordinary doctors, and who do not take medicines that are made from drugs. There are many ways of caring for and treating health problems that are an alternative to ordinary medicine. These alternatives are part of the health care available to people. Most are holistic, which means they look after the whole person, not just the part of the body that is ill or in pain.



Health problems can often be treated with natural remedies.

NATUROPATHY

Naturopathy, or health healing, is a way of treating disease in natural ways. A naturopath doesn't just treat an illness, but tries to find out why a patient has that illness. The cause of the illness is then treated to stop that illness happening again. Naturopathy teaches people to have a more responsible attitude to their health, by making sure they eat properly and have enough exercise and rest.



Naturopaths teach people about the importance of good food, exercise and rest.

Naturopaths believe that there are four main causes of ill-health. They say the body gets rundown and low on vitamins because of too little rest, too much stress, a poor diet, or because part of the spine is out of place. They believe that because much of the food we eat has been processed in factories, we do not get all the vitamins we need. Eating the wrong foods also means that our bodies don't get rid of all the waste, and this stops our bodies working properly.



A variety of vitamins and minerals can be bought at a supermarket or health food shop.



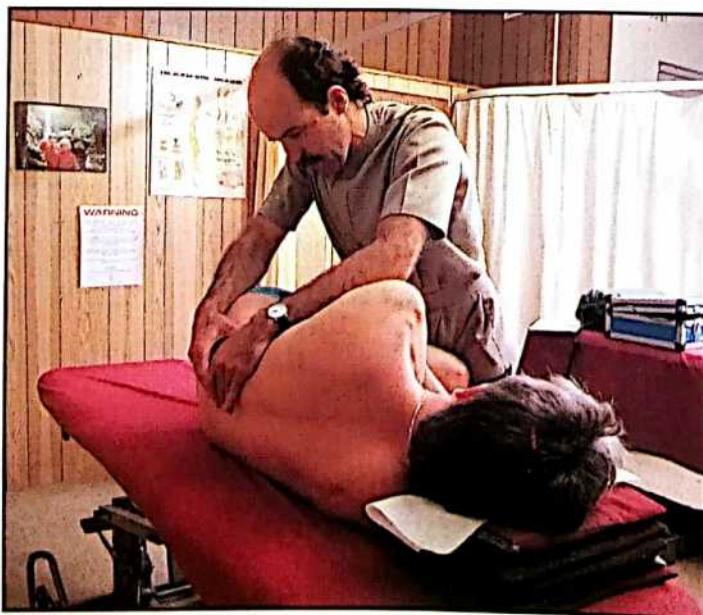
A trainee naturopath learns how to massage the spine correctly.

Naturopathy includes exercise and correct eating, vitamin and mineral tablets to make up for what we're missing out on and medicine made from herbs, which are useful plants. Massage is used to put the spine back into place and to get the insides of the body working properly again. It takes four years of full-time study and training to become a naturopath.

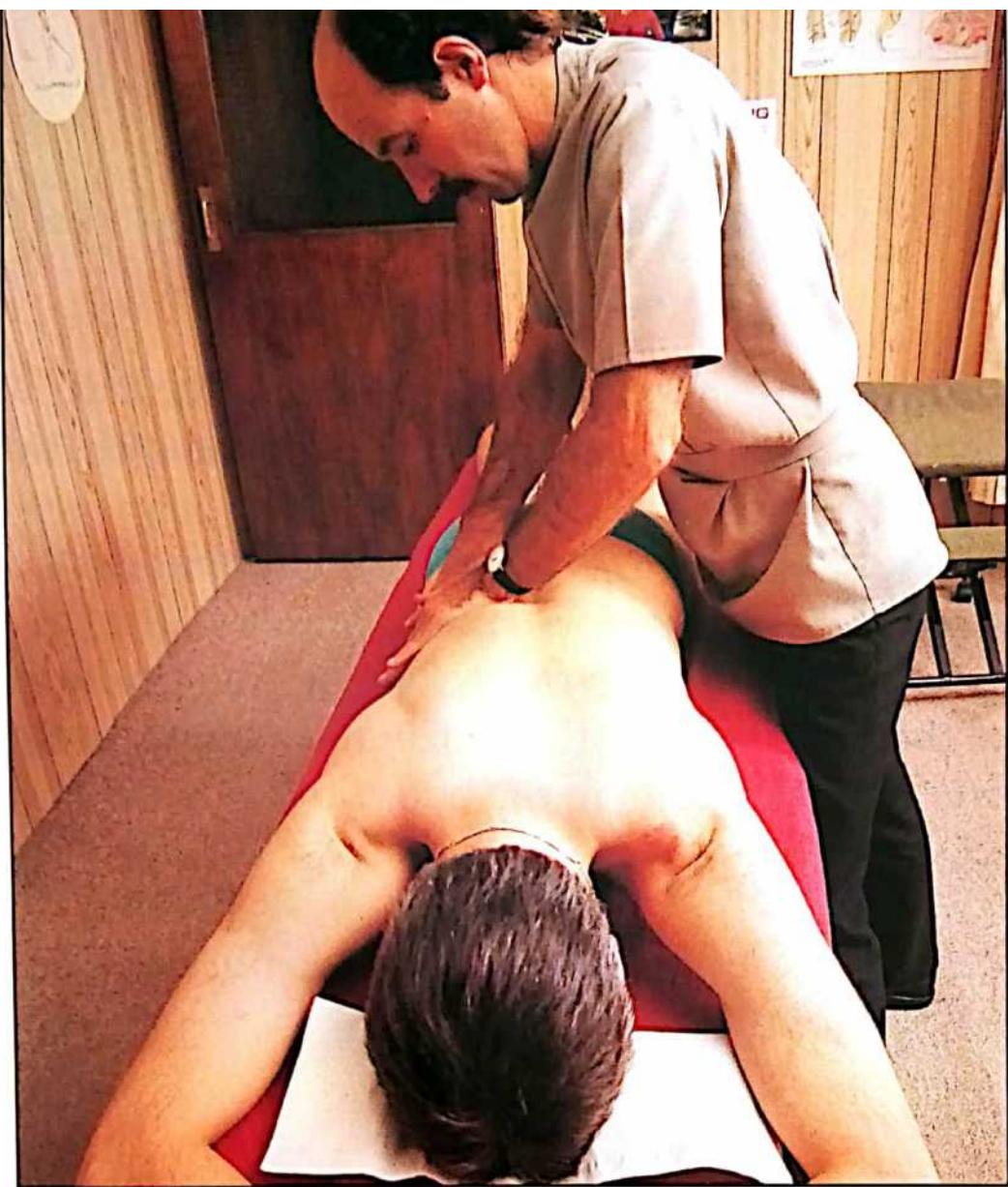
OSTEOPATHY

An osteopath works with bone and muscle, and with the nerves of the human body. Some of the problems an osteopath deals with are backache, arthritis, asthma, nerve damage, stress and sporting injuries.

Sometimes an osteopath watches a patient walking about to see where the problem is. At other times he or she may order an X-ray to help find the problem. One form of treatment is massage. This is a special way of rubbing parts of the body to ease stiffness and pain. Parts of the body such as the spine or the muscles are sometimes stretched. If bone joints are out of position, they can be massaged back.



Osteopaths use massage as a way of treating patients' problems.



Osteopaths often treat athletes who suffer from sporting injuries.

Osteopaths correct people's movement and how they hold their bodies. This improves their breathing and allows all the inside parts of the body to work properly because they are in the right place. Osteopaths also work out exercise programs for athletes. The exercises help them strengthen the muscles they use most in their particular sport. It takes about five years to learn how to be an osteopath, studying applied science at a college.

IRIDOLOGY

Iridology involves looking carefully into a person's eyes and being able to understand any signs of illness.

When people are unwell, their eyes show signs of it. The coloured part of the eye, the iris, may have little spots or flecks in it. The position of these, as well as their size and colour, indicate what is wrong in the body, and where. The whites of the eyes may be a yellowish colour, or pink, or streaked with red lines. An iridologist can tell from all these signs and many others, just what the patient is suffering from.



Iridologists can find out what patients are suffering from by looking closely at their eyes.

HOMEOPATHY

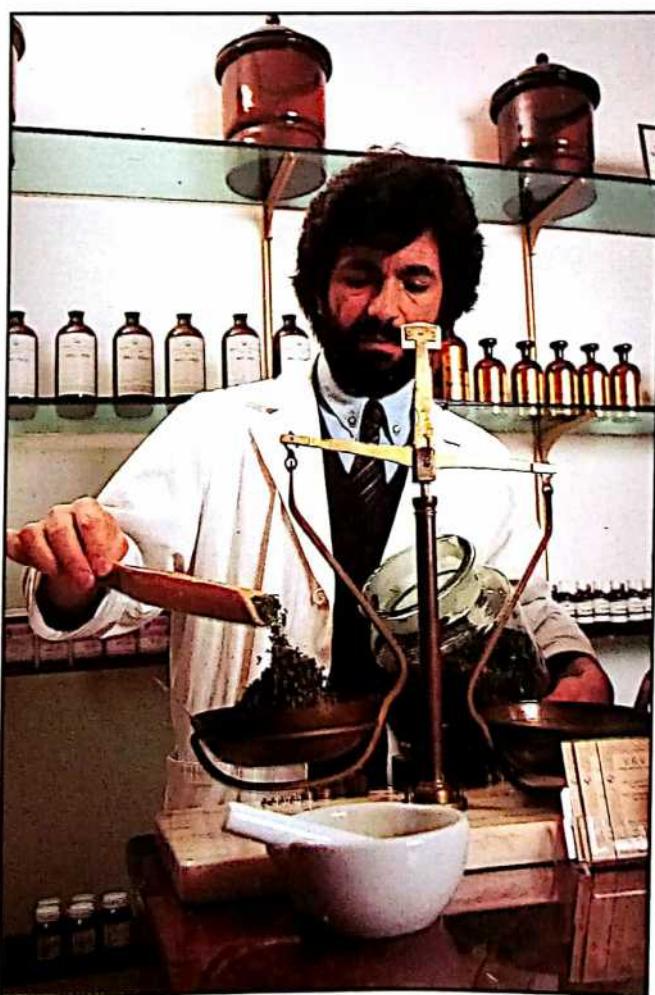
In homeopathy, people are given a small dose of an illness on purpose. A homeopath is a person who uses this method to treat people. Homeopaths believe that by having the illness in a small way, the body will know how to fight the disease if it attacks the body at a future time.



Homeopaths treat patients by giving them a small dose of an illness.

WORKING WITH PLANTS

Herbalists make medicines and tonics from many different plants. In China this has been the traditional medicine for many centuries. The roots, stems, leaves or flowers of certain plants are used to make medicine. These are dried and ground into a powder, and then mixed with water to form a liquid or made into tablets. Sometimes the oils in a plant's leaves or stems might be used.



Herbalists use many different plants to make medicines.

Many thousands of plants are useful for making medicines, and even today many are used. In health shops you can see many herbal remedies on the shelves.



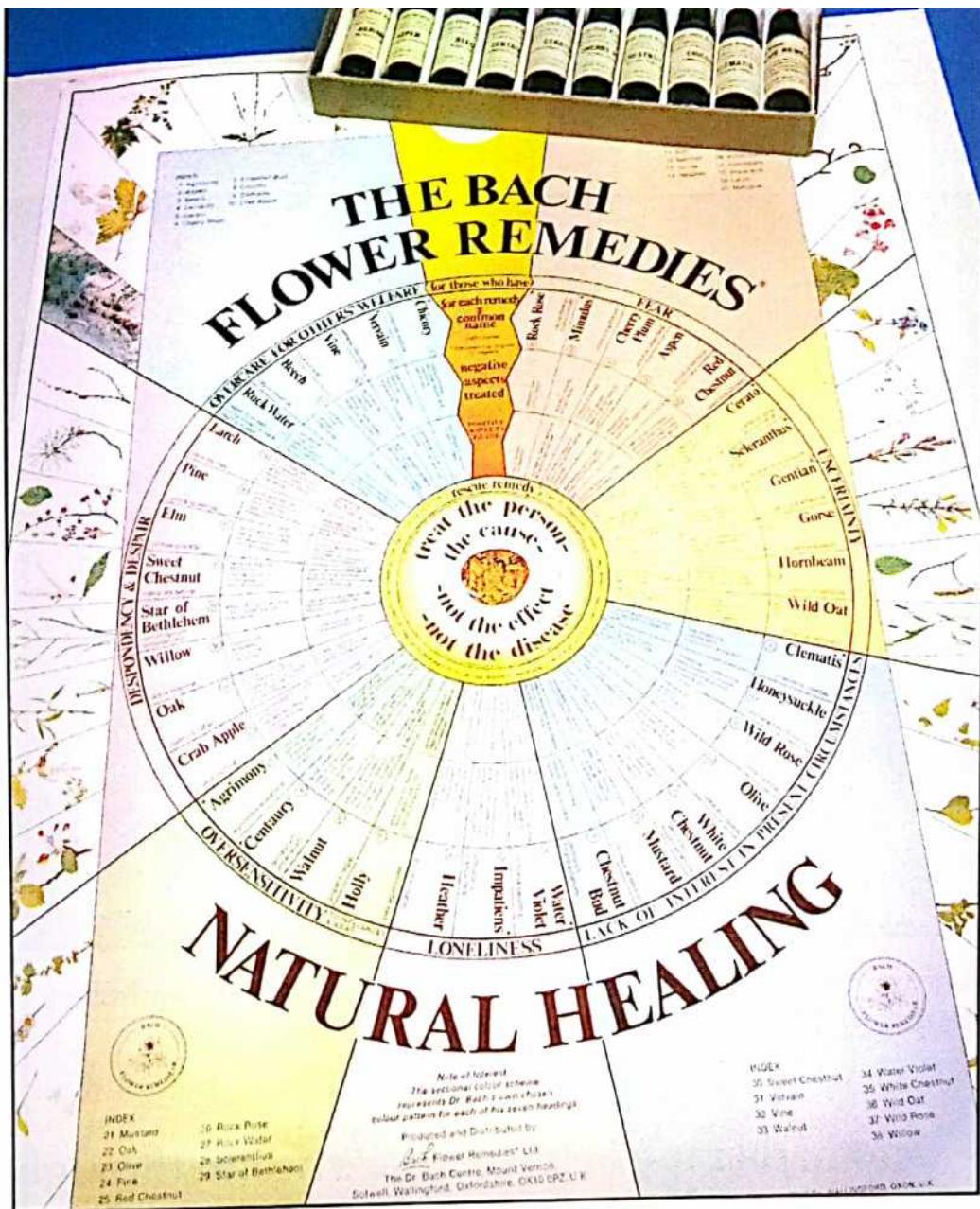
Health shops contain herbal remedies for many illnesses.

Many people visit a herbalist when they are unwell. The herbalist may give them medicine made from herbs, or some dried herbs for making an infusion to drink. To make an infusion, dried leaves are put in a container and boiling water is poured in. The mixture is left for a while and then drunk. Making a pot of tea is making an infusion of the leaves of a tea plant.

A herb is any plant which can be used for its flavour or scent, or is useful in making medicine. Many plants can be used to make medicine. Carrot tea is good for bladder or kidney problems, and the seeds are useful for coughs. Tea made from the dried leaves of the camomile plant is very calming. Oil from the lavender plant when rubbed on, is soothing for rheumatism and sprains. The smell of lavender oil is calming, and a few drops of the oil in a bath can be used when people are upset or nervous. Bark from the oak tree can be used to make medicines to ease fevers, and for treating sores that bleed for a long time.



Lavender oil is a natural treatment for easing the pain of rheumatism.



Bach Flower Remedies use different flowers to ease certain emotional conditions.

Bach Flower Remedies use certain flowers to ease certain emotional problems that people may have. There are twelve of these emotional conditions, including irritation and impatience. The flower used to ease impatience is called impatiens. When the condition is decided on, the flower essence for that problem is given to the person. He or she takes the essence a certain number of times each day.

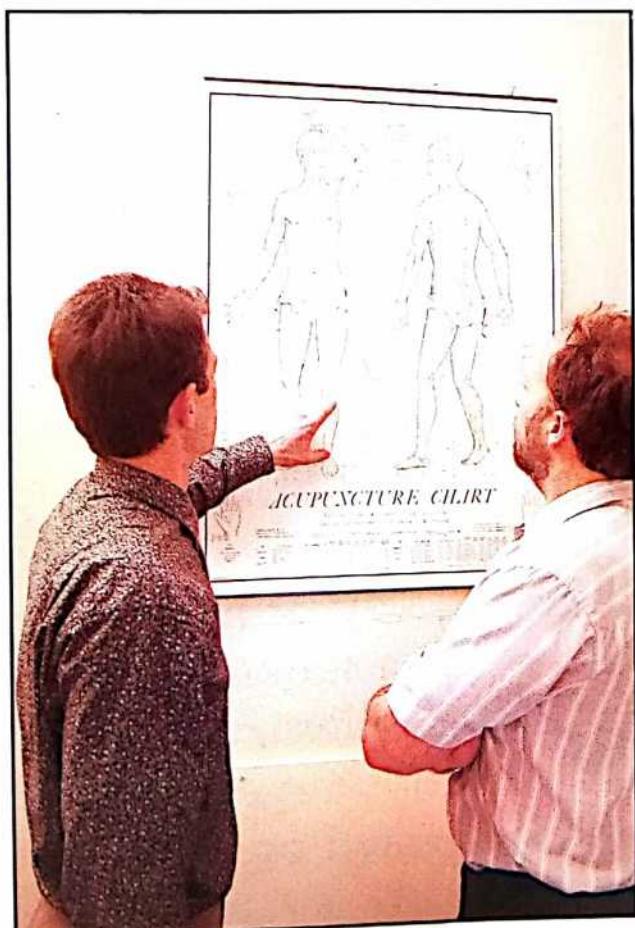


Aromatherapy uses the smell of different plant oils to help people's health problems.

Aromatherapy helps people's health through the smell of different plant oils. Different smells, or aromas, can be used to help people to relax or ease worry or fear. Aromas can help people's skin problems, headaches, pains and other problems. Basil, rubbed on the temples, can ease a bad headache, it also soothes people who are anxious. Sandalwood oil is good for sore throats and laryngitis, it is also good for calming fears. The oils are mostly used for massaging the body. Sometimes people put the oils in a warm bath. Others heat the oil over a candle so that the aroma floats in the air around them.

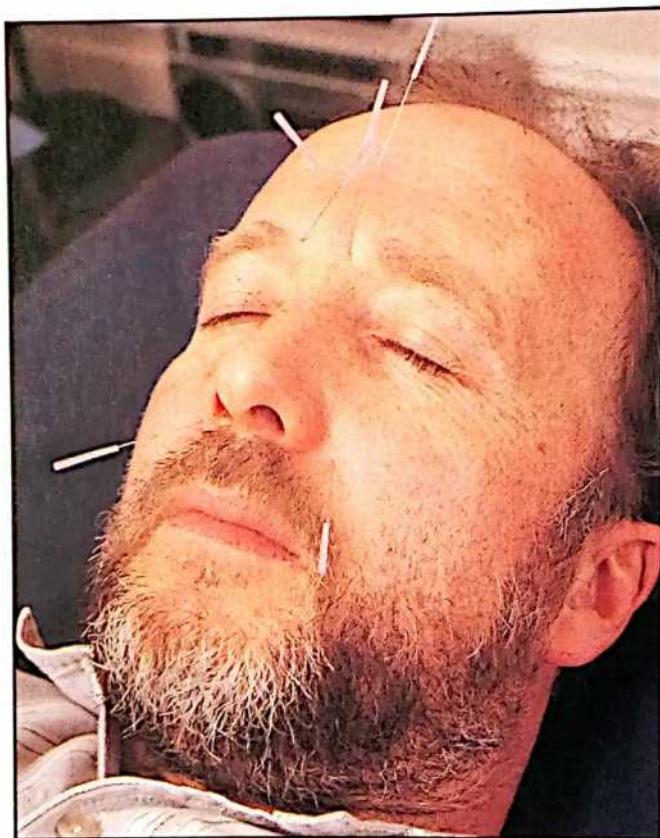
PRESSURE POINTS

Acupuncture is a centuries-old form of medical treatment which began in China and is now used all over the world. An acupuncturist knows where all the nerves in the body are located. There are many 'pressure points' all over the body, and each point affects certain nerves. Acupuncture treatment involves putting small, fine needles through the skin at these pressure points. The needles are twisted in, and the patient feels only a small prickle.



Acupuncturists treat patients by putting needles into 'pressure points' on their body.

Acupuncture can be used as an anaesthetic. The needles are stuck in at certain pressure points, blocking a sense of feeling to various nerves. Surgeons can perform an operation while the patient is awake and not feeling a thing.



This patient is having acupuncture treatment to help his sinus problems.

Acupuncture can also be used to treat many other conditions, such as sinus problems and parts of the body that don't work properly. Several weeks of treatment may be needed. At each treatment needles are put into one or more pressure points, for a minute or less each. When the needles are removed the nerves of those parts of the body being treated are activated again.



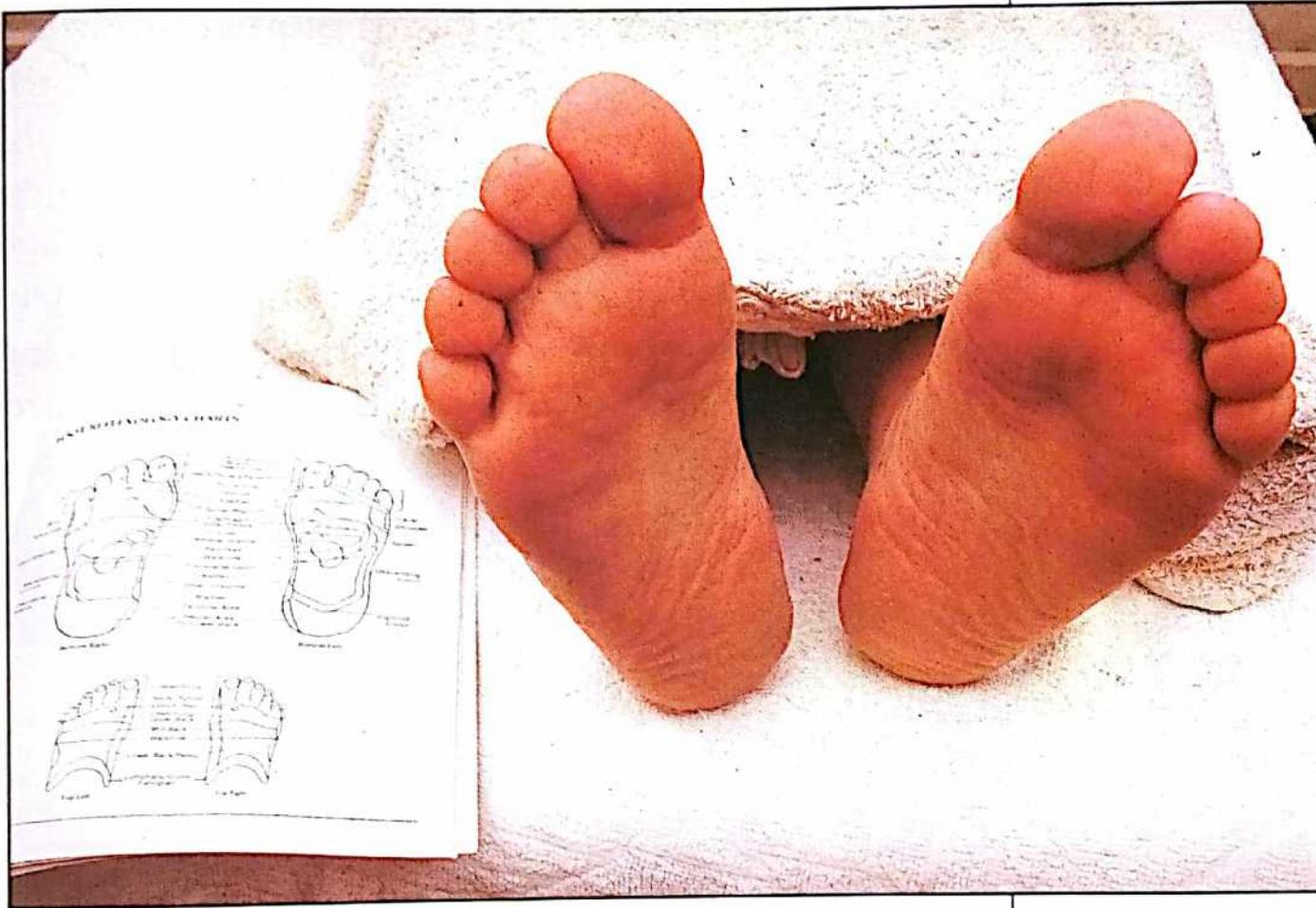
The hunger feelings of people who need to lose weight can be controlled by acupuncture.

Acupuncture is often used to help people give up smoking or other drugs. The needles are placed in pressure points that control the desire for the drugs, and ease that desire. In the same way, acupuncture can help people who need to lose weight. The nerves controlling hunger feelings are numbed so that the person's appetite is made less.

Acupressure is similar to acupuncture. The same pressure points are used, but instead of needles being put through the skin, the person's body is massaged at those points. The massaging keeps the nerves active and working, and keeps all the inside parts of the body operating efficiently. Massage makes the blood flow strongly through the muscles and the nerves controlled by the pressure points.



Acupressure uses massage to keep nerves working properly.



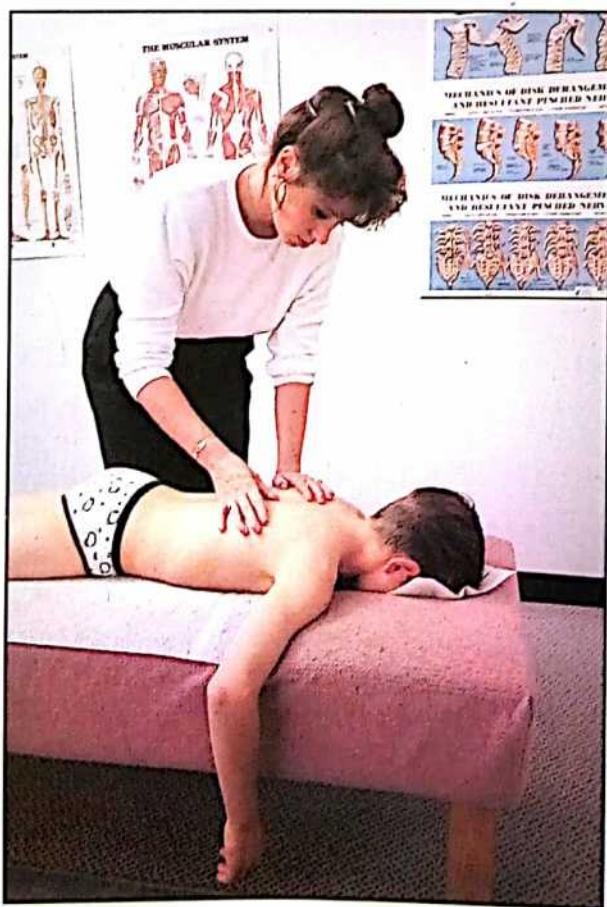
Reflexology uses the soles of the feet to find out what is wrong with a person.

Reflexology is similar to acupressure, but the pressure is applied to the soles of the feet only. The soles are like diagrams of the whole body. Each part of the body has a 'companion spot' on the soles of the feet. The reflexologist presses each of these points. The points on the sole that are sore indicate the parts of the body that are not working properly. These points are massaged to give relief to the part of the body that is not working well.

CHIROPRACTIC

Another natural method of health care is chiropractic. A chiropractor does not treat patients with drugs or surgery, but with adjustments to their bones, mainly the spine. He or she presses certain areas of the spine that are out of place, to relieve pressure on nerves and to get the spine into its correct position.

Chiropractors believe that you must first find out why an illness occurs, or why a part of the body stops working, and treat that.



Chiropractors treat patients by adjusting their bones, mainly their spine.

Many people first visit a chiropractor when they have back pain, neck pain or even bad headaches. The chiropractor will treat any specific injuries first. Then he or she will work on the whole spine, strengthening it and getting all the bones back into their correct position so that the patient can move easily.



Chiropractors work on the whole spine to help make it strong.

Chiropractors find out as much as they can about a patient's lifestyle. This includes the work they do, the sports and leisure activities they enjoy, their diet and their family medical history. The aim of chiropractic is to get people fit and well, and to keep them that way.

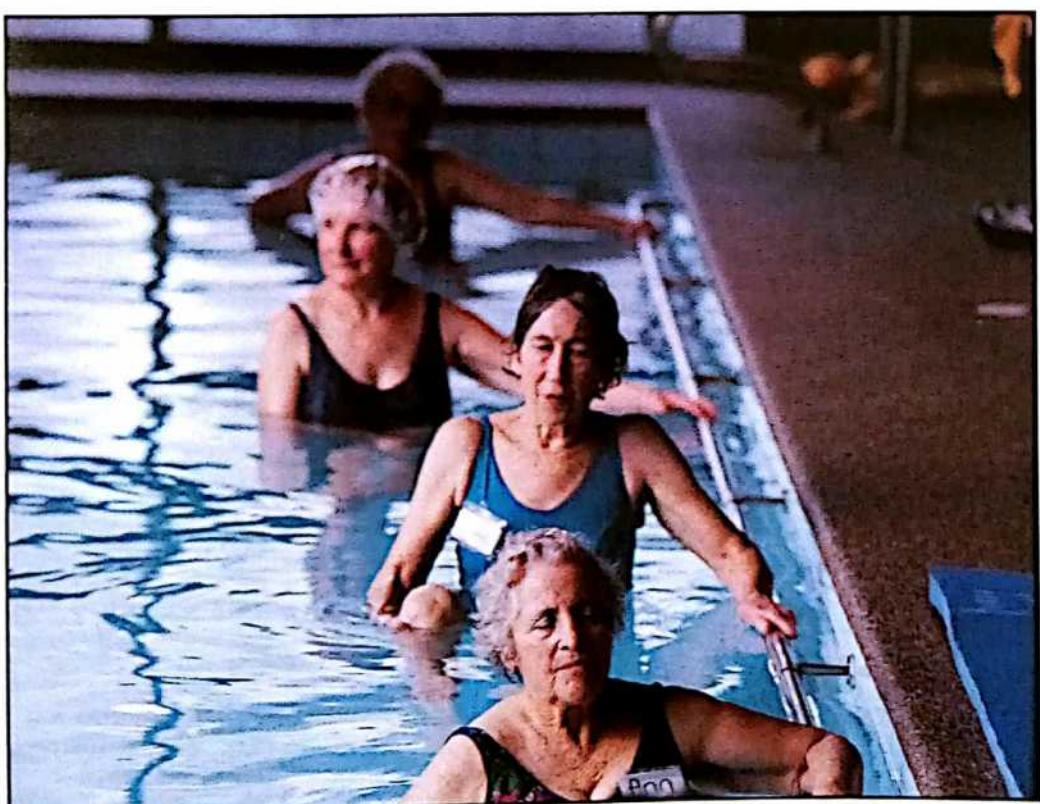


This chiropractor is explaining the importance of the nervous system in good health.

Chiropractic treats many different health problems that begin with the spine and nerves. Chiropractors believe that the human body can heal itself, provided the body has proper rest, nutrition, and a nervous system that is working correctly. The nervous system is made up of the brain, the spinal cord (which is protected by the spine) and the nerves. The nervous system controls all the other body systems.

HYDROTHERAPY

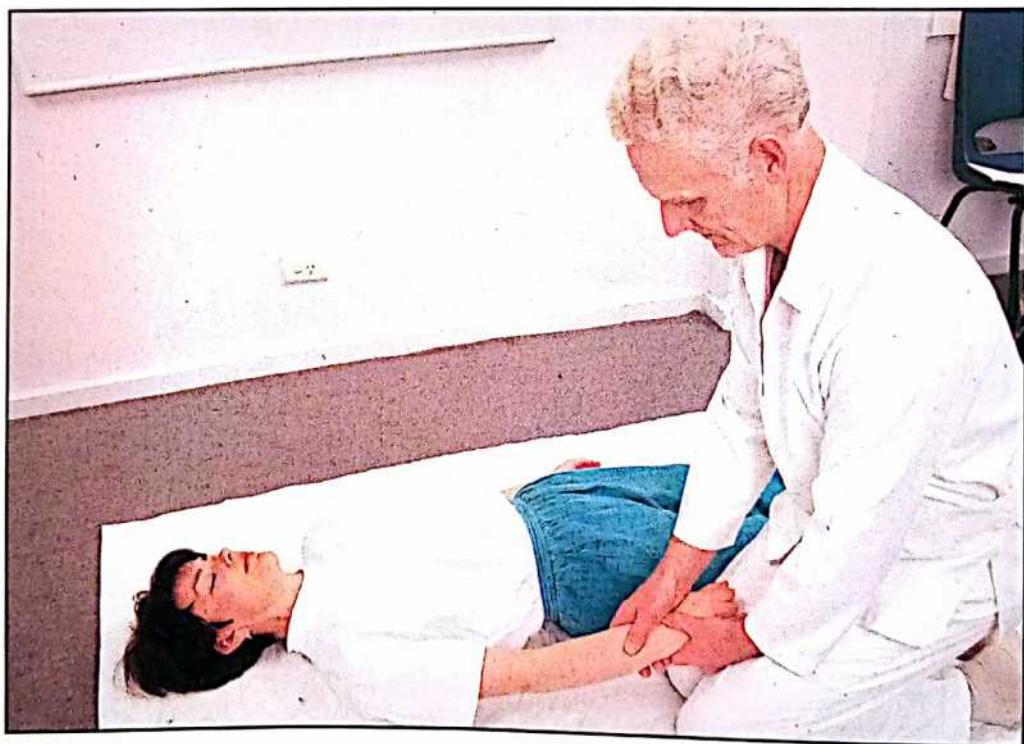
Hydrotherapy means therapy with water. Usually it is done in a very warm swimming pool. People who have been injured and need to exercise their muscles need warmth or the injured muscles tighten up. Old people or people who, for various reasons, cannot move easily may be encouraged to have hydrotherapy. They do special exercises in the warm water, gently pushing and pulling against the water. Being in the water makes movement easier because the water helps people float.



Hydrotherapy exercises are done in a swimming pool.

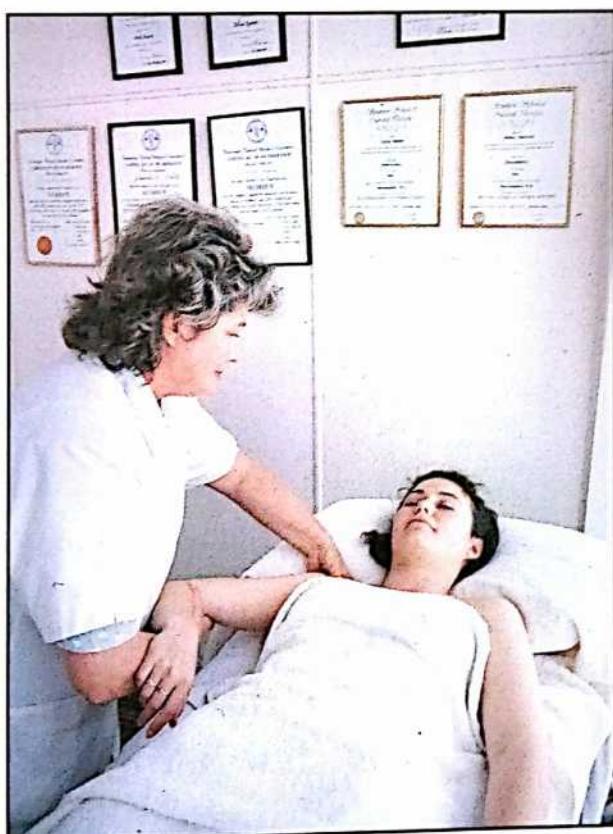
MASSAGE

Shiatsu is a Japanese form of massage. As with acupressure and reflexology, Shiatsu works on pressure points. These are for different zones of the body, and each zone is linked to various organs inside the body. Massage of each pressure point affects the organs linked to it, and releases any tension there. Sometimes wastes that should have passed out of the body get stored in some organs, these are called toxins. Shiatsu works at preventing disease, because the massage releases the toxins and they pass out of the body.



Shiatsu massage can help to rid the body of toxins.

Therapeutic massage involves healing through the hands. The masseur starts with long, flowing strokes of the hands as he relaxes the person being massaged. Then he uses kneading movements to find and ease areas of tension, pain and stress, or to release the energy in a person. Joints are stretched and moved to loosen them up. In massage the body is seen as a whole made up of connecting parts. This is why the whole body is massaged, not just the parts that are painful or tense.

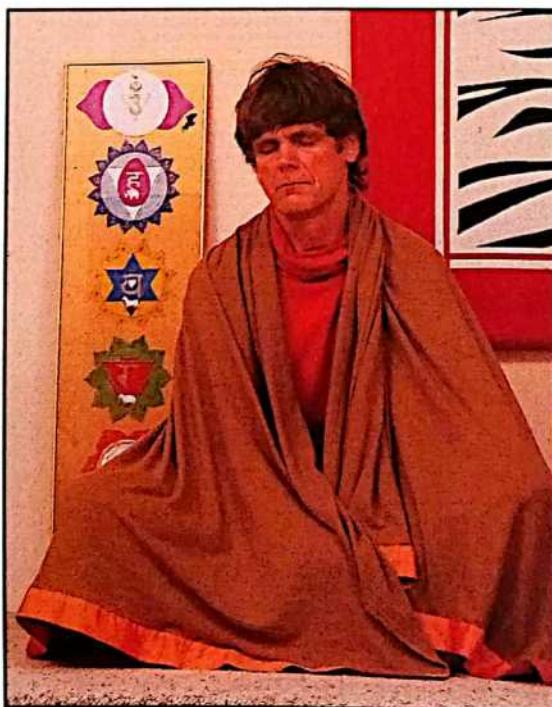


Therapeutic massage works to ease the whole body of tension, pain and stress.

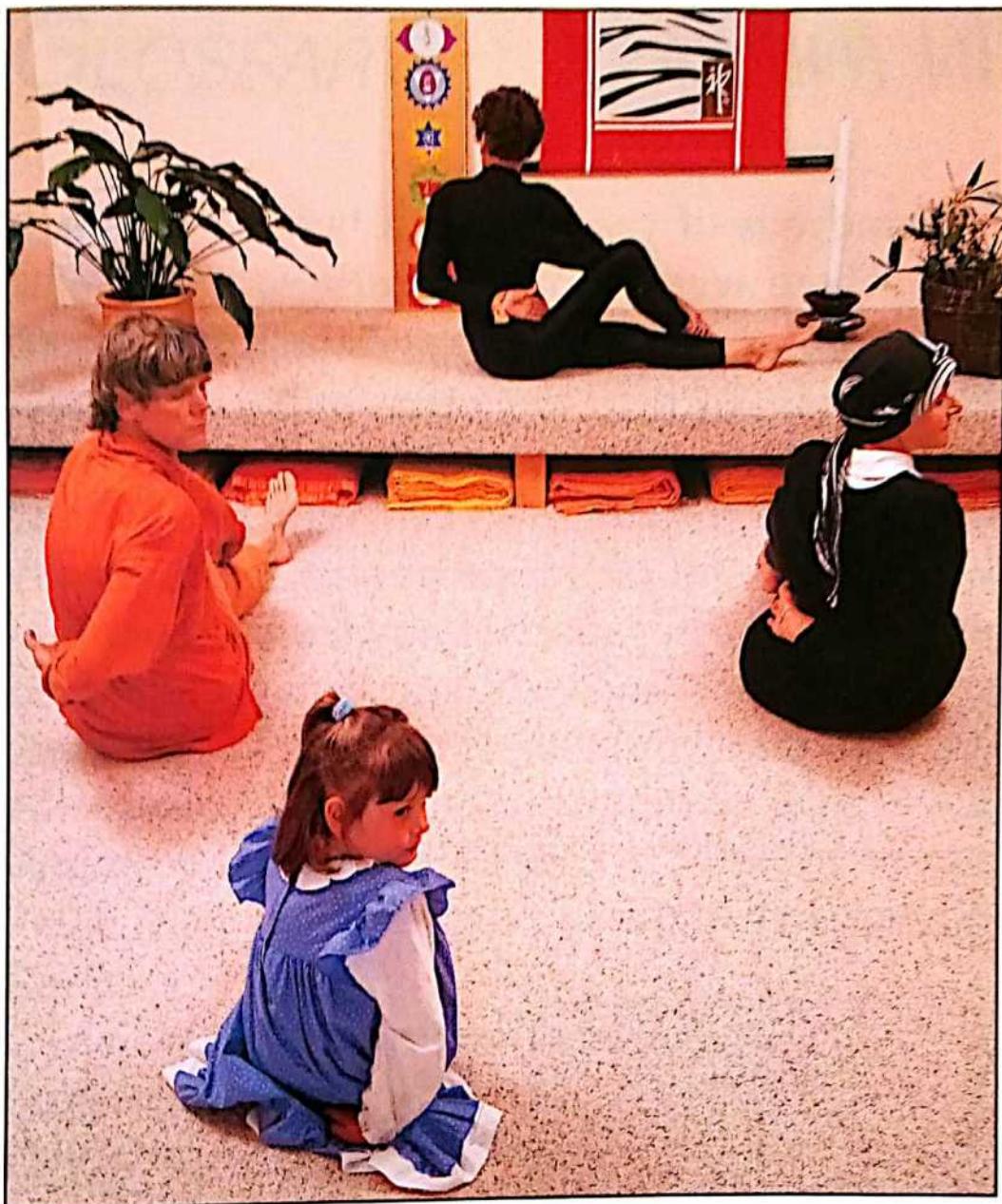
Massage helps prevent illness because it takes away tension and stress, and relaxes joints, muscles and organs inside the body.

RELAXING THE MIND AND BODY

Meditation is a way of totally relaxing the body and mind. People keep very still and allow their minds to become completely free of thoughts. It is like taking 'time out' before rushing off on the day's activities. People feel relaxed and re-energised after meditation; they are able to think clearly, they are better able to make decisions and they feel no stress. Many people believe that daily meditation can reduce stress and stop certain illnesses. These include cancer and heart disease which are fuelled by over-stress.



Meditation allows the mind and body to relax completely.



Yoga leaves the mind relaxed, and the body flexible.

Yoga is an ancient Indian belief that uses physical movements and positions of the body combined with meditation. It totally relaxes the mind and stretches all parts of the body, leaving it fit and very flexible. Yoga enables people to be free of stress and anxiety, and to feel good in their bodies and their minds.

IN THE PAST

Hundreds of years ago, all healing was natural. There were people, mostly women, who knew of hundreds of herbs and their many uses. These wise women were often feared as witches because they knew about many mysterious things, which made them powerful. If a 'witch' wanted to, she could encourage that idea by using some of her special knowledge. She might cast a spell on someone's cow, then secretly feed it a herb that would affect its milk supply. People would give her presents to make sure she stayed friendly, in case they needed her 'magic powers' one day.



Hundreds of years ago people believed that witches knew secret medicinal uses of herbs.

GLOSSARY

Alternative

Having a choice between two or more things.

Anaesthetic

A treatment that stops a person's sense of feeling for a period of time.

Diet

The usual foods a person eats.

Masseur/Masseuse

A person who gives a massage.

Organs

Parts inside the body that perform special tasks.

Processed Food

Fresh food changed in a factory before sale.

Remedy

A medicine or treatment that cures an illness.

Surgery

Operating to cure illness or injury. A room where a doctor sees patients.

Therapy

A series of curing treatments.

Vitamins

Found naturally in various foods, or in tablet form, these are essential for good health.

X-ray

A light ray that photographs the inside of the body.

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Working in Medicine is a set of four reference books for middle primary school children. Each book focuses on a different area of medicine, the role of people who work there, from surgeons and physiotherapists to herbalists and microbiologists, and the training required for these occupations. Also included is a brief 'In The Past' section, which provides students with an insight into the history of medicine.

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